

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

April 23, 2001

5:15 PM

Chairman Gatsas called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Pariseau, Thibault, and O'Neil

Absent: Aldermen Hirschmann

Messrs: D. Prew, R. DiPentima, Aldermen Lopez and Shea

Alderman Gatsas addressed Item 3 of the agenda

Presentation by Diane Prew, Information Systems Director regarding the City's Web site.

Ms. Prew stated thank you for giving me this opportunity. I just wanted to bring you up-to-date on the website and give you a few more details than we had an opportunity to talk about the other night. As I think I mentioned in my letter, the original website was put together by Dick Houle a number of years ago primarily for providing purchasing information to various vendors who wanted to do business with the City. We inherited the website about a year ago and we did a few things to it. There were a number of departments that had their own websites. We brought all of those together under the City's website so that you could link to them. They are not all part of the website as yet and that is one of the things we will be working on. We gave it a little bit of a facelift and we added the e-mail capabilities to it. A couple of departments did add some web pages. I don't know if any of you have been out there recently, but Parks & Recreation has a very nice presentation. They even have a survey out there and they are doing a very nice job of keeping that up-to-date. Overall though the site is not very exciting. We get about 120 hits per day. It is not really designed with the constituent in mind. If you go to the website you really have to know that in order to seek information you have to do it by department. Most people doing business with the City really don't care what department, they just want to know where to go to register their cars or whatever business they want to do so that is what we plan to do with the new website. We want to make it oriented to the City's constituents. We want to give it a new look and feel and make it look professional and give it a nice image for the City. Our objectives are to make it easier for citizens to communicate with

City officials and departments and to obtain the information related to City activities and to conduct business with the City. We want to make the website fully available to persons with disabilities. We want to promote the City to businesses, to developers and visitors and we want to have a sustainable process that we can maintain and continue to grow with the City. We want to allow the departments to be able to maintain this information on their own because that is really where the meat of the website is going to be - that current information is provided by the departments and that it is kept current. We want to shorten delivery time and improve services to the residents and we want to improve the City's image. We are entering into a contract with consultants. There are really four phases to what we are undertaking. The first phase is an assessment and planning. We want to identify all of the opportunities that exist for automation through the Internet. This will be done through research, interviews with City departments, City officials, and MDC Directors and then these various potential applications will be researched and costs associated with them will be determined and they will be prioritized as to how they meet the objectives. The end product of that will be a Master Plan that will take us forward.

Alderman Lopez asked have you had any discussions whatsoever with the HR Director as to how you are going to tell somebody that this is their job to keep up the website.

Ms. Prew answered no we have not had those discussions at this stage, but your point is well taken that this really needs to be made part of someone's job description in each department to do this work.

Alderman Lopez stated I would suggest before we go on-line and do all this you should have some type of discussion with the HR Director to see if we are talking about an A-STEP or a step increase or what. If we are going to add this to somebody's job description, they will want more money.

Alderman Thibault asked, Diane, is this going to mean an increase in your staff. Are you going to have to hire more people for this?

Ms. Prew answered we did, in this year's budget process, approach the Mayor for a Web Systems Administrator. Once this thing really gets going, there is going to be a lot to supporting this. This is a major application for the City as we go forward into the future and we are looking for support for that.

Alderman Thibault asked what kind of salary are we looking at.

Ms. Prew answered these people do not come cheap. We are looking somewhere in the \$40,000's. I think it is somewhere around \$47,000.

Alderman O'Neil asked who is responsible for...I know on MCTV we will see bid lists and that and traditionally they are very outdated. Are individual departments responsible for that meaning today is 4/23 and there will be items up there from...and I can't say this recently because I have not seen it recently but as an example you may have something that was bid in mid-March still up on the screen.

Ms. Prew asked are you talking about MCTV.

Alderman O'Neil answered yes.

Ms. Prew stated I am not sure where that information comes from. I know that Public Building Services has something on the website that is called the VIP, which is the Vendor Information Program. That is handled through Public Building Services.

Alderman O'Neil asked so they should be updating that regularly.

Ms. Prew answered yes and this is something that we are going to have to work on with the departments to be sure that it is kept current and with the tools that we are going to be using it should be a fairly simple thing for them to do.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 9 of the agenda:

Communication from the Director of Information Services seeking authorization to dispose of obsolete computer hardware.

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to approve this request.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 4 of the agenda:

Communication from Alderman Levasseur seeking a change in the City's Ordinances relative to raising the penalties/citations issued to those in violation of Section 150.060 Sanitation.

Alderman O'Neil stated I am aware that Highway has had some discussions with their own staff regarding this. I have talked to Frank a number of times about it. One of the problems is there is multi-jurisdiction on this thing.

Chairman Gatsas asked do you want to put it on the table until we get them all together.

Alderman O'Neil answered yes. I think all the departments that have some responsibility like Building through their different divisions...Health has the right to cite people under certain conditions and Highway does. Can we see the departments get together and come back with one recommendation?

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to table this item and request that the Highway, Building, Health, Fire, Police and City Clerk's Office get together and come back to the Committee with one recommendation by their next meeting.

Alderman Thibault stated if we do get into that I want to be sure and this is information that I get from the citizens, they want to be sure that they are informed that this is going to happen. Whether we use the newspaper or the radio or whatever, make sure that the people are informed before we do this because we are talking about quite a jump. I support it because I have the same problem but I just want to be sure that the people are aware of it.

Alderman O'Neil asked can we make sure that the information is back to us by the next Committee on Administration meeting.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 5 of the agenda:

Communication from Alderman Sysyn regarding an Elderly Tax Exemption.

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to refer this item to the Assessor's Office.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 6 of the agenda:

Communication from the City Clerk seeking consideration of a policy/procedure that pets not be allowed inside of the City Hall Complex buildings except for those used to aid handicapped persons.

Alderman Thibault moved to approve the request. Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion.

Alderman O'Neil asked did something happen. I am curious as to what prompted this.

Deputy Clerk Normand answered an individual had threatened to bring in his rottweilers to correct a situation that he felt existed. In talking to Red Robidas, we thought that this would be the best solution to the problem.

Alderman O'Neil asked what about the guy threatening someone. Nobody did anything about that?

Deputy Clerk Normand answered this individual is dealing with the Police on another matter so it is going to be corrected.

Chairman Gatsas called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 7 of the agenda:

Communication from the Health Officer submitting proposed ordinance changes to fees for food establishments and other Health Department inspectional services.

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to approve this ordinance and refer it to the Committee on Accounts and Bills on Second Reading.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 8 of the agenda:

Communication from the Health Officer submitting a proposed ordinance for control of potential mosquito breeding area.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to approve this ordinance and refer it to the Committee on Accounts and Bills on Second Reading.

Alderman O'Neil stated there was some talk last year when we were going through this whole thing about...I know there was some concern about pools and private property but there was also some talk about catch basins and that. Do we have any plan for the City streets or our lakes and ponds and that?

Mr. DiPentima replied what we are planning to do and have started doing already is put out notices to folks in their water bills. Some of you who have received water bills may have seen the notice about how to prevent mosquito breeding and we are trying to work with property owners. We are doing a show for MCTV on this also.

Alderman O'Neil asked what about things like...I remember Fred talking specifically about catch basins on the street as an area where...

Mr. DiPentima interjected Fred has sent a correspondence to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen outlining an entire plan for the West Nile Virus control for the City that you should be receiving shortly.

Alderman Shea stated I wondered whether there is going to be any penalty for people who intend to ignore this ordinance.

Mr. DiPentima replied what we would do as with any of our other public health nuisance issues, we would send out a letter requesting that the property owner abate the nuisance and make repeated inspections and if it is not corrected within the appropriate timeframe then we have the ability to write tickets like we do with our other violations starting with a \$25 citation and if it is not corrected within the appropriate time then it goes to \$50 and then the next time it goes to \$100.

Alderman Shea asked have you designated what an appropriate time is with this ordinance.

Mr. DiPentima answered I think it is a discretionary thing depending on the situation. Some situations may require additional work so I think we need to have a little bit of leeway in working with the property owner to give them ample opportunity to correct the situation.

Alderman Shea asked do you ever offer certain help to people who may have specific problems like someone who may come in from a foreign country and not understand the laws here. In other words, let's assume just for the sake of discussion that a person has an inground pool but they really don't know anything about taking care of it or much about the fact that they are a property owner in America. Can you suggest certain...if a person is looking for help, well I have tried to help a particular person but the guy says to me look I don't want to bother with that pool and I don't want to ruin my equipment. Do you have any help in that regard?

Mr. DiPentima answered we do. We work with them within our capabilities and then beyond that we would provide...we can't obviously solicit and support any individual but we would provide lists of appropriated licensed contractors and that sort of thing.

Alderman Lopez asked do you have a plan to educate the public on MCTV or with flyers. Is there a plan put in place before we send somebody a notice of violation? Do you understand the question? Do you have a plan put in place for publicity

and education to the general public on these particular items or do we just wait until something happens and then send them a citation?

Mr. DiPentima answered one of our plans is to...once this ordinance is adopted by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen then we will do a public notice to the community so that they are aware that there is an new ordinance that we will be enforcing particularly because of the mosquito disease issues that we are concerned about.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 10 of the agenda:

Communication from the Chief of Police seeking Board approval that the Police Department cease in providing local record checks and refer citizens to the Criminal Records Division of the NH State Police.

On motion of Alderman Thibault, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to approve this request.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 11 of the agenda:

Communication from Lloyd Basinow requesting Board investigation of the Health Department fluoride sponsorship.

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to receive and file this item.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 12 of the agenda:

Communication from Bernard H. Cowette seeking to schedule a meeting with the Committee for the purpose of discussing the potential for the integration of data conversion and imaging technology into the on-going process of municipal records retention.

Alderman Pariseau moved to refer the item to Information Systems. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion.

Alderman O'Neil stated I don't think it is an Information Systems issue. I think it is more like a City Clerk and archives issue.

Deputy Clerk Normand replied right. This deals with record retention.

Chairman Gatsas asked should we refer it to the City Clerk then.

Alderman O'Neil answered I think this gentleman has met with Leo.

Deputy Clerk Normand stated the issue here is there are State laws that set the record retention rates that we hold records for a certain amount of time and Mr. Cowette has been notified of those. We suggested that he talk to the State because that is where it has to change for us to do anything different. I would suggest that you receive and file this item.

Alderman O'Neil stated I think he references in his letter that he wants to come in and I don't know if there was new information presented to him after he wrote...the letter goes back a way doesn't it.

Deputy Clerk Normand replied not that I am aware of. He has met with our archivist.

Alderman Pariseau withdrew his motion to refer the item to Information Systems. Alderman Thibault withdrew his second.

Alderman Pariseau moved to receive and file this item. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion.

Alderman O'Neil stated I am opposed to that. The guy wanted to come in and make a presentation. If I recall and I don't want to debate this issue but in my discussions with Leo it wasn't all a State law issue it was more a local policy issue as well.

Deputy Clerk Normand responded I only became aware of this this afternoon, but Leo did say that he talked to the individual and that his only recommendation at this point was to send him to the State to have the laws changed for records retention.

Alderman O'Neil replied again my recollection of my discussion with this gentleman and Leo, not all of it had to do with State law changing but that is fine if that is what you guys want to do. That is why I suggested the guy write the letter to the Administration Committee.

Chairman Gatsas asked do you want him to come in.

Alderman O'Neil answered I don't know. There is a little bit involved with this.

Alderman Pariseau stated I was under the impression that the purpose of this letter was to have the City do business with this company.

Alderman O'Neil replied I think it is more the technology of storing information but I don't think he is the only one out there to be honest with you.

Alderman Pariseau responded that is exactly my point.

Chairman Gatsas called for a vote on the motion to receive and file. The motion carried with Alderman O'Neil being duly recorded in opposition.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 13 of the agenda:

Communication from Pamela Cushing asking the Board to reconsider its previous vote in allowing the Shriners Circus to perform in Manchester.
(Note: circus held April 5-8, 2001.)

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to receive and file this item.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 14 of the agenda:

Communication from Fred Harris on behalf of Riverfest seeking that the area generally bordered by Elm Street to the east, Brook Street to the north, Granite Street to the south, and the Merrimack River to the west be designated as "Riverfest Area" from September 7-9, 2001, and that the City Clerk's Office be instructed not to issue permits to any vendor in this area during this time.

Alderman Thibault moved to approve this request. Alderman O'Neil duly seconded the motion for discussion.

Alderman O'Neil asked where is he with paying his bills.

Chairman Gatsas asked do you want to table this until he comes and talks to us.

Alderman O'Neil stated I know they were moving on it, but I don't know if he...

Alderman Thibault interjected I know the Mayor got involved with it too and I don't know where it is at either.

Alderman O'Neil asked does anybody know. Doesn't he still owe some money?

Alderman Pariseau replied not he.

Alderman O'Neil responded right, Riverfest. Does Riverfest still owe a considerable amount of money? How about we pass this but ask Mr. Harris to come in?

Alderman Pariseau stated I don't really have a problem with it but here we are blocking off all of these streets so other vendors aren't allowed to do anything and yet Riverfest is still losing money. I wonder what effect it would have if we didn't charge the vendors X number of dollars in that area and give some back to Riverfest if that is the case.

Alderman Thibault replied I guess what happens is that the guys that go on the grounds pay a big fee and that is why they want to protect the area. Maybe we should ask these questions to Mr. Harris.

Alderman Pariseau responded I understand that but if we were to allow vendors within this area we would probably be making more money and we could shuffle that over to Riverfest.

Alderman O'Neil stated I think Alderman Thibault is right. I think Riverfest charges people within that zone so that is a revenue. I don't know, maybe Matt knows more about it.

Deputy Clerk Normand stated the City has no involvement, unless they come in for an individual peddler's license at which time they would be charged \$25 for a temporary peddler's license. What Riverfest does is they obtain a fair permit and then charge everyone that is going to participate whatever that fee is.

Alderman Thibault replied I am sure it is more than \$25 and that is why they want to protect it.

Alderman O'Neil stated they would be in worse shape if they didn't do this.

Alderman Lopez stated I would just like to comment knowing a little bit more about Riverfest. Matt is right and Alderman O'Neil is right. They have to start planning this thing as far as giving the vendors licenses for those particular areas and negotiate with the vendor going in and if they don't know that they are going to have this then it could be...if you would open it up they could lose money. Let's say for example the balloon guy that goes into Riverfest they might be charging \$300 for that guy to pay versus the \$25 that the City requires. If the City were to open up these streets to vendors, Riverfest wouldn't get the \$300 and Alderman Pariseau would probably be correct that they would be more in debt in the long run if they didn't have this protection.

The Committee asked that Mr. Harris be invited to a future meeting.

Chairman Gatsas called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 15 of the agenda:

Communication from Mary Sartwell seeking permission to hang a 60-foot banner across Elm Street beginning at 5:00 PM and removed immediately after runners and walkers have passed under on Thursday, August 9, 2001 in conjunction with the 9th Annual CIGNA HealthCare Corporate Road Race.

Alderman Thibault stated we have had a problem with those things before and I am wondering if Traffic shouldn't be involved in deciding how we should handle this. I know that the one on Main Street came down and Traffic had to go down there in the middle of the night.

Alderman O'Neil stated this is only going to be up for a couple of hours. The road is closed down also.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to approve this request.

TABLED ITEM

Communication from Alderman Lopez requesting that the Board of Assessors provide information over the next 60 to 90 days on processes for updating assessment of City properties.
(Note: approved report to be provided by 11/18/00 and tabled on 11/21/00.)

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Alderman Lopez stated I think there should be an interim update on where we stand on this. They met for four weeks up at the state in reference to the revaluation and they should have some idea of the direction we are going in.

Chairman Gatsas replied there is a piece of legislation that just came out of the Senate. It came out of Ways and Means and it is going to Finance and then to the House.

Alderman Lopez stated there are some strict guidelines on that particular bill.

Alderman O'Neil asked why are we leaving this on the table.

Alderman Lopez answered I would recommend that the Committee leave it on the table because there is a lot of pertinent information that the City Assessors should be providing to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and I think it is very crucial that they answer some of the questions as to what the Assessors are going to do in the future.

Chairman Gatsas replied I don't think they have an opportunity until that legislation comes out of the state.

Alderman Lopez stated well that is your opinion but I think regardless of what comes out of the state we are dealing as a City here and it has not been done properly in the last 10 years. Every 10 years we are going to start evaluating instead of looking at different things.

Chairman Gatsas replied they aren't going to have a choice if the state passes the law.

Alderman Lopez stated then the questions I have don't have any value then. I would ask you out of courtesy to leave this on the table and have them answer the questions.

Chairman Gatsas replied if they gave you your answers today and the legislation passed, what difference does it make what they said. If they want orange and they tell them black at the state level what difference does it make?

Alderman Lopez responded it makes a lot of difference in the assessing of the City according to what I read in that bill.

Chairman Gatsas replied I don't think so. It was in my committee and I can tell you that it is pretty strict.

Alderman Lopez responded it is pretty strict but they are going to have to do a lot more.

Alderman O'Neil stated right but every community is going to have to do the same thing. If the law says five years then everyone will have to do it every five years.

Chairman Gatsas stated I don't have a problem if you want to bring it back once the legislation either goes up or down.

Alderman Lopez replied I would appreciate leaving it on the table so that we can get an answer instead of receiving and filing.

Alderman Pariseau moved to receive and file. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion. Chairman Gatsas called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried with Alderman O'Neil duly recorded in opposition.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee